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THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 16th February 1955.

The House met in the Assembly Chamber, Government Estate, Mount Road, at ten minutes past eleven of the clock, Mr. Speaker (THE HON. SRI J. SIVASHANMUGAM PILLAI) in the Chair.

SRI B. K. NALLASAMY :—" On a point of order, Sir. If the Speaker is late and if the Deputy Speaker is present, should not the Assembly commence its work at the scheduled time? "

MR. SPEAKER :—" To-day we were having a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee in my Chamber. That is why we came late. Not only myself but also the Leader of the House and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition came late to-day."

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Tax on palmyra trees.

* 882 *Q.*—SRI R. S. ARUMUGAM: Will the Hon. the Minister for Revenue be pleased to state—

(*a*) how long did the abolition of taxes on palmyra trees in holdings situated in Tirunelveli district engage the attention of this Government;

(*b*) when was the tax on trees on wet lands abolished and what were the circumstances under which it was abolished and the intention of the Government when this relief was given;

(*c*) when was the tax on trees on dry lands abolished; and

(*d*) the loss of revenue to the Government by the abolition of this tax?

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU :—' (*a*) The matter was engaging the attention of the Government from the year 1937 onwards.

" (*b*) At the instance of Srimathi V. Lakshmi Ammal, M.L.A., in 1946, the Government stated that they would examine the question of modifying this mode of assessment. In 1949 the Government issued orders to the effect that the palmyra tree tax levied on holdings registered as wet lands in the district of Tirunelveli and in the Sattur and Srivilliputtur taluks of the Ramanathapuram district should be wholly remitted with effect from fasli 1359. The reason was that it was considered anomalous to charge a tax on a few incidental palmyra trees on the bunds of wet lands when a separate tax was levied on the wet crop produced from the land.

" (*c*) The tax on trees standing on dry lands in Tirunelveli district and in the Sattur and Srivilliputtur taluks of the Ramanathapuram district was abolished with effect from fasli 1363.

[16th February 1955

" (*d*) The loss of revenue to the Government by the abolition of this tax is roughly: (1) Rs. 80,000 per annum from dry lands; and (2) Rs. 6,500 per annum from wet lands."

Scheme to bring under cultivation the Koothali Estate.

* 883 *Q.*—SRI K. MOIDU: Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state whether the Government have any scheme to bring under cultivation all the waste lands of Koothali Estate by introducing co-operative farming?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" No."

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR :—" On the socialistic pattern that is to be the basis of our country's administration, may I ask the Hon. Minister, why there should not be co-operative farming at least in Government-owned lands which they got free? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" We do not have any such scheme on hand now. Certainly, when the time comes to dispose of the lands, all these things would be considered."

Cashewnut workers in South Kanara

* 732 *Q.*—SRI K. P. GOPALAN: Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to the state—

(*a*) whether the Government received any memorandum on 19th May 1954 from the Secretary of the Cashewnut Workers' Union, Mangalore, South Kanara, requesting the Government to appoint a committee to go into the conditions of the cashewnut workers in the State with special regard to their wages, bonus, leave facilities, dearness allowance, etc.; and

(*b*) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) Yes, Sir.

" (*b*) The Government have decided not to constitute a Tripartite Enquiry Committee for the Cashewnut Industry. But the Commissioner of Labour has been directed to conduct conciliation proceedings on the specific demands of the Cashewnut Workers' Union, Mangalore, and submit his recommendations to Government in due course."

SRI K. P. GOPALAN :—" The Minimum Wages Act gives power to the Government to constitute a committee to fix minimum wages for workers. Why should not the Government exercise that power and make an elaborate inquiry into the conditions of the poor labourers? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" If the hon. Gentleman refers to the cashewnut workers, I shall examine the suggestion that a committee might be constituted for fixing minimum wages for them."